

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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R 221055Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5157

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

W CONSUL KARACHI 5552

AMCONSUL LAHORE

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 4065

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN

SUBJECT: INDO-PAK RELATIONS

REF: ISLAMABAD 3946, NEW DELHI 5730

BEGIN SUMMARY: PAKS APPEAR HEARTENED BY INDIAN RESPONSE TO BHUTTO'S MESSAGE, DESCRIBED BY MFA OFFICIAL AS POSITIVE AND HOPEFUL, PARTICULARLY BY WILLINGNESS OF GOI FOR FIRST TIME TO DISCUSS RESTORATION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. WE GET IMPRESSION THEY WILL APPROACH TALKS IN FORTHCOMING SPIRIT AND THAT THEY ARE CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THEM. PAKS MAY PROPOSE THAT TALKS BE HELD HERE IN LATE APRIL/EARLY MAY. THEY SEEM TO WANT TO MOVE PROMPTLY. ATMOSPHERE HERE SEEMS RIGHT FOR SUBSTANTIAL ADVANCE TOWARD NORMAL AATION. END SUMMARY.

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1. PAKS APPEAR HEARTENED BY INDIAN RESPONSE TO BHUTTO'S MESSAGE, AND ARE PARTICULARLY PLEASED THAT MRS. GANDHI SPOKE FOR FIRST TIME OF WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS: OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT THEY WILL APPROACH INDO-PAK TALKS HERE IN A FORTHCOMING SPIRIT. THOUGH THEY ARE PUZZLED BY GOI TURNABOUT, THEY SEEM CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC THAT THE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS WILL BRING ABOUT SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS AND VERY POSSIBLY THE DIPLOMATIC TIES THEY HAVE WANTED RESTORED SINCE THE SIMLA CONFERENCE OF 1972.

2. DISCUSSING RECENT EXCHANGES WITH POL COUNSELOR APRIL 21, MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL (SOUTH ASIA) HAYAT MEHDI CHARACTERIZED PM GANDHI'S APRIL 11 LETTER AS "POSITIVE AND HOPEFUL." MESSAGE WAS MARRED, HE SAID, ONLY BY "CUSTOMARY INDIAN ALLEGATION" ABOUT PAK PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE. HE CONFIRMED THAT MRS. GANDHI'S OFFER TO DISCUSS RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC TIES WAS FIRST TIME SUCH AN OFFER HAD BEEN MADE BY INDIANS. HE CONFESSED THAT HE HAD PERSONALLY BEEN SURPRISED AT THE FORTHCOMING APPROACH THE GOI HAD TAKEN AND SUGGESTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN A CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION IN MFA ABOUT WHAT INDIAN REACTION WOULD BE TO BHUTTO OFFER TO DROP ICAO CASE.

3. MEHDI SAID THAT IN HIS PROMPT REPLY TO MRS. GANDHI, BHUTTO HAD WELCOMED HER MESSAGE AND HAD TOLD HER THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAHI WOULD BE WRITING SHORTLY TO GOI OPPOSITE NUMBER JAGAT MEHTA TO SUGGEST DATES FOR ISLAMABAD MEETING. HE SAID HE WAS ABOUT TO CABLE SHAHI IN IZMIR TO GET CLEARANCE FOR MESSAGE TO INDIANS SUGGESTING PERIOD BETWEEN APRIL 28 AND MAY 8 AS BEST TIMES, GIVEN SCHEDULING PROBLEMS HERE. HE CONVEYED THE IMPRESSION THAT GOP WANTS TO MOVE PROMPTLY IN RESPONSE TO NEW INDIAN ATTITUDE.

4. MEHDI SAID THAT PAKS WOULD BE WILLING TO DISCUSS WHOLE RANGE OF ISSUES, AS THE SHAH AT LAST SESSION WITH INDIANS LAST MAY. HE SAID THAT GOP HAD HAD NO ADVANCE SIGNALS OUT OF NEW DELHI SUGGESTING THE CHANGE OF ATTITUDE MRS. GANDHI'S LETTER REPRESENTED FOR THE PAKS, NOR HAD THE PAKS RECEIVED ANY INDICATION OTHER THAN MRS. GANDHI'S

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LETTER WHAT LINE INDIANS WOULD TAKE WHEN THEY CAME TO ISLAMABAD.

5. MEHDI SAID HE HAD COME TO NO JUDGMENT ABOUT CONNECTION BETWEEN RECENT CHANGES IN INDIAN RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND WITH PAKISTAN, AND SAID HE WAS AWAITING SPECULATIVE WORD FROM PAK EMBASSY IN PEKING. DISCUSSING POSSIBLE IMPACT

OF EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS BETWEEN PRC AND INDIA ON PAKISTAN HE TOOK EXPECTED, POSITIVE LINE, MAINTAINING THAT IMPRBJED SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS COULD BE HELPFUL IN THAT (1) CHINESE COULD BRING BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE TO BEAR IN NEW DELHI IN FAVOR OF MORE FORTHCOMING GOI LINE TOWARDS PAKISTAN AND (2) INDIANS MIGHT BE LOATHE TO DISTURB IMPROVING RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA BY TAKING HARSH ACTIONS AGAINST PAKS. HE SAID THAT BASIC CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOP AND PRC WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED.

6. ALTHOUGH SENIOR GOP FIGURES CONCERNED WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS ARE OUT OF COUNTRY AT RCD SUMMIT, AT LEAST ONE, MINISTER OF STATE AZIZ AHMED, HAS CHIMED IN WITH SOME FURTHER HELPFUL NOISES ON INDO-PAK RELATIONS. ACCORDING APRIL 21 PRESS HERE (AND MFA HAS CALLED OUR ATTENTION TO HIS REMARKS), AZIZ AHMED REAFFIRMED IN INTERVIEW IN IZMIR THAT THERE WERE NO OBSTACLES IN PAKISTAN'S VIEW TO A RESUMPTION OF TIES WITH INDIA AND SAID HE HOPED INDIAN DELEGATION WOULD COME TO ISLAMABAD AS SOON AS WAS CONVENIENT. ASKED ABOUT KASHMIR, HE SAID GOP WAS PREPARED TO WAIT AS LONG AS INDIA WANTED BEFORE SEEKING A SETTLEMENT AND THAT IN MEANTIME "WE WILL RY AND SEE NO HEAT IS GENERATED IN PAKISTAN ABOUT IT". (ASKED ABOUT FACT THAT STATEMENTS AND STORIES OUT OF NEW DELHI HAVE NOT MENTIONED KASHMIR, HAYAT MEHDI TOLD POL COUNSELOR PAKS WERE NOT CONCERNED BY THIS. HE NOTED THAT IN HER LETTER MRS. GANDHI HAD EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS ALL OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS.) AZIZ AHMED ALSO STATED, ACCORDING PRESS, THAT HE HOPED THAT INDO-PAK TALKS WOULD HELP TO PROMOTE NORMALIZATION IN THE ENTIRE REGION INCLUDING CHINA AND BANGLADESH.

7. WE GET OVERALL IMPRESSION THAT ATMOSPHERE HERE IS RIGHT FOR SUBSTANTIAL ADVANCE TOWARD NORMALIZATION. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAKS CERTAINLY RECOGNIZE THAT THE INDIANS MIGHT TAKE THE HARD LINE SUGGESTED BY G.K. REDDY'S SERIES (NEW DELHI 5730) BUT WE BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE PROBABLY AT LEAST TENTATIVELY CONCLUDED THAT FOR FIRST TIME IN ALMOST A YEAR AND A HALF THE POLITICAL WILL TO MOVE FORWARD EXISTS ON BOTH SIDES. WE HOPE THEY ARE RIGHT.
BYROADE

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